

This Week In Congress

February 9, 2006

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress." I hope you find this newsletter useful.

Congressional Mail Comes to a Halt

On Monday, the discovery of the poison ricin in the mailroom of a Senate office resulted in the suspension of all mail deliveries to the House and Senate office buildings in Washington, D.C. Mail service to my district offices in Hays and Hutchinson has not been interrupted. The ongoing investigation is preventing further mail deliveries to congressional offices in Washington, D.C, and all mail is currently being screened and held in an offsite location. At this time, it is unclear whether this mail will ultimately be delivered or destroyed.

As a result of this incident, I am encouraging Kansans to contact me via email, phone or fax, or through my district offices in Hutchinson and Hays. The contact information for all of my offices is listed below.

Appearing on Kansas Public Television

On Monday evening, I appeared live on Kansas public television stations to discuss the 2004 congressional session and to answer questions from viewers. During the hour-long broadcast, viewers from across the state called in with questions ranging from the national deficit and the budget, to the war in Iraq and the rising costs of health care. Kansans are very concerned about these issues, and I appreciate that folks took time out of their busy schedules to call in with questions.

Friends of Scouting Appreciation Breakfast

On Tuesday morning, I spoke at the annual Friends of Scouting Appreciation Breakfast in Salina. As a former Boy Scout and now an adult scoutmaster, I was honored to be included in this year's celebration and recognition of people who support the Coronado Area Council of Boy Scouts. At the breakfast I spoke about the positive influence that scouting plays in the lives of our youth.

Hearing on Veterans' Funding

On Wednesday, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to review the President's proposed budget for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) for the next year. The Secretary for Veterans' Affairs, Anthony Principi, testified before the committee about the future funding for the VA's three major functions, including the VA Health Care Administration, the VA Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Association. The secretary also discussed proposals for improving veterans' education, pensions, housing and burial. As the committee works through next year's VA budget, I will continue to ensure that we work to meet the needs of our veterans. After the hearing, I had the chance to visit with Secretary Principi to discuss issues important to Kansans and our veterans.

Final Stretch of the "Big First" Listening Tour

With 13 stops left on this year's tour, my annual "Big First" Listening Tour is nearly completed. If you haven't had a chance to attend one of the town hall meetings, I hope you can make it out to one of the final stops. It has been a pleasure meeting with folks during the past 56 tour stops, and I look forward to meeting with you when I am in your area.

Today, I will be in Marienthal and Scott City, and I will be in Grandview Plaza on Friday. My remaining town hall meetings will be in Grainfield, Selden, Atwood, Oberlin, Norton, Meade, Liberal, Hugoton, Dodge City and Jetmore.

For more information about the tour stops and for a complete schedule, please visit my website at:

[http://www.house.gov/moranks01/
_press2003/prTourSchedule04.html](http://www.house.gov/moranks01/press2003/prTourSchedule04.html)

In the Office

Jeff Hofaker with Phillips County Economic Development came in to discuss the Learning Center for Entrepreneurship and other economic development issues. The Kansas Insurance Commissioner, Sandy Praeger, and the Assistant Insurance Commissioner, Bob Tomlinson, were in to discuss insurance fraud

Also in the office this week were Janet Harness of Highland, Judy Smith of Muscotah, Tamara Prochazka of Salina, Dolores Servaes of Atchison, and Elaine Montgomery of Effingham on behalf of the National League of Postmasters. They were in the office to discuss the

importance of preserving rural post offices and share their support for H.R. 1231, a bill to allow federal civilians and military retirees the option of paying for their health insurance on a pre-tax basis

Members of the Kansas Municipal Utilities were in the office to discuss high natural gas prices and the pending energy bill. Colin Hansen, Executive Director of the Kansas Municipal Utilities, from McPherson, and representatives from across the state were in to talk about air emission standards and hydropower.

Dr. Ron Hovis, President of McPherson College, and Doug Penner, with the Kansas Independent College Association, were in to discuss the Higher Education Reauthorization Act. Dr. Richard Spindle, President of MidAmerican Nazarene University, Frank Moore and Dwight Douglas were in to discuss improving distance learning opportunities.

Members of the Kansas School Board Associations were in the office this week to share their concerns about federal education legislation. Cindy Kelly of Topeka, Rodney Roush of Stafford, Pam Gruber of Hope, Robert Loftlin of Weskan, Darlene Jones of Plainville, and Glennys Doane of Downs were in to discuss the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Also in the office this week were faculty from Kansas State University. Dr. Chuck Rice, Dr. Elizabeth Unger, Dr. Richard Hayter, Dr. Terry King, Dr. George Ham, Dr. Forrest Chumley, and

Dr. Steven Graham were in to discuss ways to improve KSU research and development initiatives during the next year.

Very truly yours,

Jerry